

Fire Station No. 28  
644 South Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS No. CA-2155

HABS  
CAL,  
19-LOSAN,  
61-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FIRE STATION NO. 28

HABS  
CAL,  
19-LOSAN  
61-  
HABS NO.  
CA-2155

1. Location: 644 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Ca. 90012
2. Present Owner: City of Los Angeles
3. Present Occupant: Vacant
4. Present Use: Vacant
5. Significance: The building is one of the first reinforced concrete fire stations in Los Angeles. It was a Class A fire-proof structure built of brick, hollow tile and concrete. Its original cost was \$50,000.

The building is an interesting and unusual design. In relation to the surrounding buildings, Fire Station 28 provides a refreshing reduction of scale and serves as a historic monument to the growth of Los Angeles.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: 1912 (City of Los Angeles, building permits)
2. Architect: J. P. Krempel and W. E. Erkes

John Krempel and Walter Erkes - The partnership produced a number of structures throughout Southern California over a twenty-year period. The firm designed the second Times Mirror Company in 1910, the home of General Otis, Santa Barbara High School, and the Maier-Brewery Company buildings, to name but a few.

Krempel was one of the earliest architects in Los Angeles. He arrived in Southern California during the mid-1880's. In 1894 he established his own office, working alone until 1911 when he joined with Erkes in partnership.

Fire Station 28 is one of the first buildings designed by the firm. The two men worked successfully together until Krempel's death in 1933.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

1908      Acquisition Deed No. 165, recorded  
December 1, 1908, in Book 3601, page 5  
James A. Brown, Blanche Brown, Elon W.  
Bramble, and Loraine Bramble to the City  
of Los Angeles

4. Builder:      Kubach and Company

5. Original Plans and Construction:      Not located

6. Alterations and Additions:      Alterations are minor;  
most have occurred on the interior. A few small  
windows on the sides of the building have been  
filled in.

B. Historical Context:      At the time Fire Station 28 was  
built on what was then Pearl Street, there was little  
commercial development in that area of town. The fire  
station must have been built to serve the needs of the  
residential and agricultural development stretching from  
Pearl Street through what is now mid-Wilshire.

The two entrance bays were designed for use by horse  
drawn engines. The building included an apartment for  
the fire captain and his family, a dorm for the firemen,  
and recreation rooms for the firefighters.

The limited size of the door bays and the general smallness  
of the station have made it unworkable for modern fire-  
fighting equipment.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

## A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This fireproof structure consists of a three story building with a basement. Major architectural features include twin parapet towers with inset arches and capped by flagpoles. The windows are contained within two story arched bays. The building has windows with pilaster and entablature surrounds. The two central doorways are recessed and framed by brackets.

The structure is built on a rectangular plan with two symmetrically placed entrance bays. The wall surface has two large arched and recessed panels with both flat and arched window openings. The brickwork is set in unusual arched patterns. Three stone shields are spaced evenly across the facade above the second story.

The eclectic architectural style is influenced by classical references with bracketed cornices. The facade is intact. Alterations are confined to the interior, with the exception of the filling in of several small window openings on the sides of the building.

2. Condition of Facric: Good

## B. Exterior Description:

1. Over-all Dimensions: The structure is located on a lot of .179 acres. The frontage is 50' and the depth is 156'.
2. Foundations: The foundations are of brick and reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: The walls are of brick construction and are, with the exception of the entrance facade, devoid of decorative detail. The entrance facade consists of a flat wall surface articulated by a double main entrance, inset bays, applied decoration and a bracketed cornice.
4. Structural System, Framing: The structure is of fire-proof brick construction with some reinforced concrete.
5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads: none
6. Chimneys: A small chimney is located in the southwest corner of the structure at the roof.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: There are two symmetrical main entrances flanking a central brick pier. The doorway configuration is flat and the doors are of wood and metal construction. Additional recess is provided by a door offset to the north of the major entrance bays.
- b. Windows and Shutters: The wall surface is relieved by two large arched and recessed panels. Set into these panels are windows with both arched and flat surrounds and pilasters attached to the wall surface. The windows are of the sash type.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, Covering: The roof is flat in configuration and is of composite construction.
- b. Cornice, Eaves: A bracketed cornice is set between two parapet towers.
- c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers: Twin parapet towers flank a parapet cornice. The towers are of brick construction and have pyramidal red tile roofs.

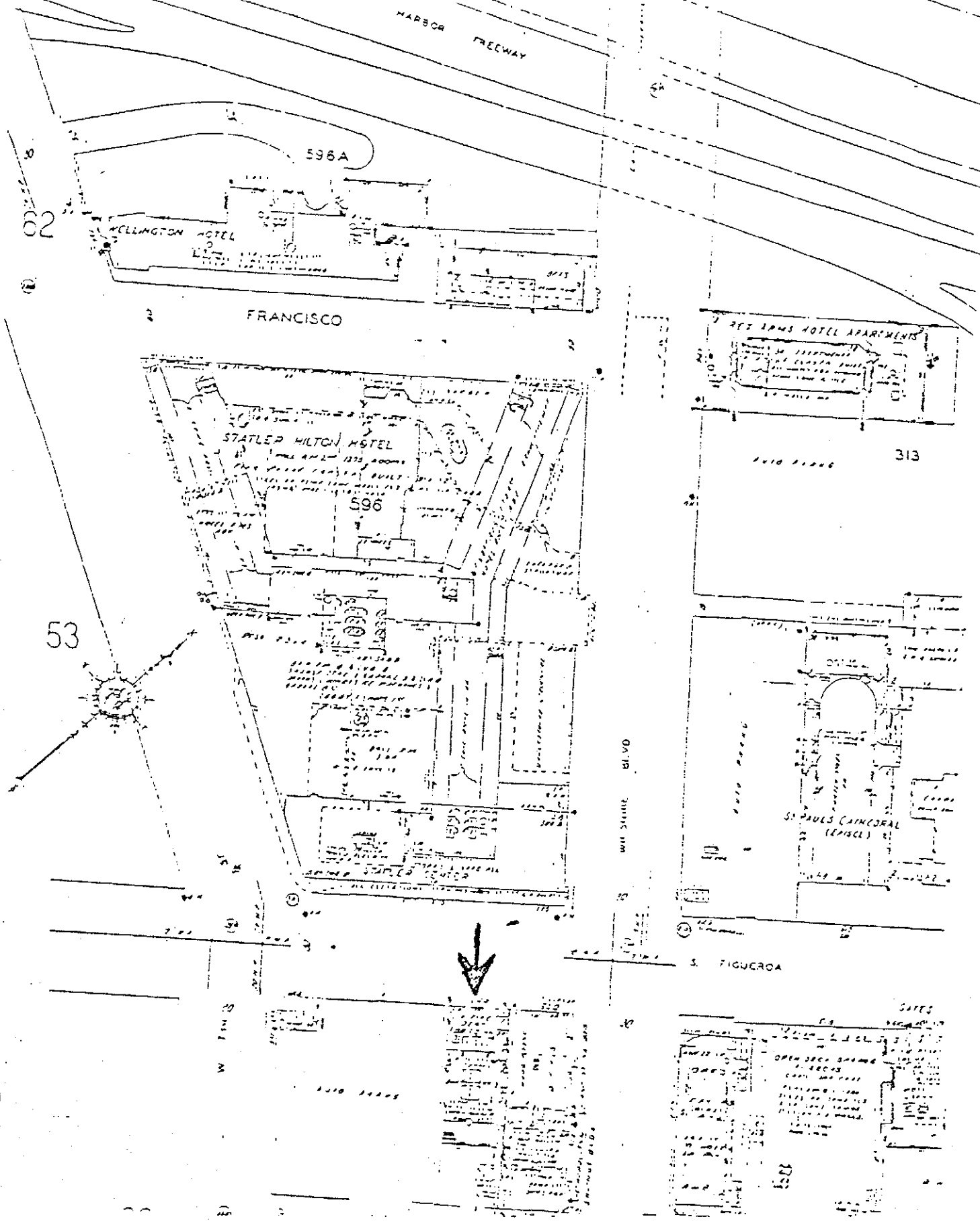
- C. Description of the Interior: Since this submission refers only to exterior recordation of the structure, only a brief description of interior details is included.

The building is designed to accommodate equipment on the lower level with living quarters above. There are, however, relatively few wall partitions on the upper stories.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The structure fronts on Figueroa Street and is oriented on an east to west axis. The structure is entered from the west on Figueroa. The building is located in a densely built urban environment and is surrounded by structures of an incompatible size, design, and scale.
2. Historic Landscape Design: none
3. Outbuildings: none

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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Los Angeles, Department of Building  
and Safety, building permits

City of Los Angeles, Department of Planning,  
Land Use Planning and Management System

County of Los Angeles, Recorder's Office,  
Official Records of the County of Los Angeles

2. Secondary Sources:

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(G. W. Baist Co., Philadelphia, Pa.: 1905)

Hatheway, Roger G., "Historic Building Survey:  
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(Los Angeles Downtown People Mover Program:  
January, 1979).

Los Angeles Times, April 16, 1911, VI, 3.

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(New York: 1883, 1927, 1958).

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Consulting Research  
Historian  
Los Angeles Downtown  
People Mover Authority  
October, 1980

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Los Angeles Downtown People Mover Project, supported by a demonstrated grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, is proposing to build an automated, grade-separated transit system in downtown Los Angeles.

A portion of the route as proposed would run along a median in the middle of Figueroa Street, approximately 30 feet from the facade of the Fire Station. Locating the DPM in the center of the street will not require alterations to the structure, but will create a new visual element of front of the structure as viewed from across the street.